

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 OMB-01 SAM-01 SAB-01 DRC-01

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R 051242Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2088

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

USINT DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 2032

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

E O 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EG, IS, SY, US

SUBJECT: ISRAELI VIEWS ON SYRIA

REF: TEL AVIV 1993 (NOTAL)

1. IN SPITE OF NUMEROUS REPORTS APPEARING IN ISRAELI PRESS
PREDICTING POSSIBLE RENEWAL OF HOSTILITIES WITH SYRIA (REFTEL,
MFA MID EAST DIRECTOR VERED TOOK RELATIVELY RELAXED
POSITION ON SUBJECT DURING APR 4 CONVERSATION WITH US. SHE
SAID THAT SHE WOULD NOT ENTIRELY RULE OUT POSSIBILITY THAT SYRIA
MIGHT ENLARGE SCOPE OF HOSTILITIES BUT THOUGHT IT UNLIKELY. FOR
ONE THING, SHE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT SYRIA WOULD RISK ACTING
ALONE AND THOUGHT IT ENTIRELY UNLIKELY THAT EGYPT WOULD SUPPORT
SYRIA IN RENEWAL OF HOSTILITIES.

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2. MRS VERED SAID CONTINUED SYRIAN SHELLING ON NORHERN FRONT WAS RESULT OF THREE CONSIDERATIONS: (A) AN ATTEMPT TO PRESSURE ISRAEL AS EGYPT HAD DONE DURING PROCESS OF DISENGAGEMENT TALKS; (B) EFFORT TO SATISFY HARDLINERS WITHIN SYRIA WHO DISAGREED WITH ASAD'S POLICY OF SEEKING DISENGAGEMENT WITH ISRAEL; AND (C) AN ATTEMPT TO IMPRESS UPON SOVIETS SERIOUSNESS OF SITUATION PREOR TO ADAD'S APRIL 10 VISIT TO MOSCOW. AS FOR POINT (B), MRS VERED SAID THAT WHILE INTERNAL OPPOSITION TO ASAD DID EXIST, IT WAS DIFFICULT TO ASSESS DEGREE TO WHICH THIS INFLUENCED ASAD'S POLICIES. SHE FELT THAT TO CERTAIN DEGREE ASAD HAD USED ARGUMENT OF INTERNAL OPPOSITION AS STRAWMAN IN ORDER TO JUSTIFY POLICIES WITH WHICH HE WAS FULLLY IN AGREEMENT.

3. REGARDING SOVIET SUPPORT FOR SYRIA, MRS VERED SAID THAT SHE DID NOT THINK USSR WAS ENCOURAGING SYRIA TO RESUME FULL-SCALE HOSTILITIES, BUT THAT BECAUSE OF SOVIET SUPORRT FOR HARD-LINE SYRIAN POSITIONS AND MASSIVE MILITARY ASSISTANCE, SYRIANS BELIEVED THAT THEY HAD CARTE BLANCHE SUPPORT FROM USSR FOR WHATEVER COURSE OF ACTION THEY WANTED TO TAKE. SHE THOUGHT IT LIKELY THAT ASAD WOULD GET COMMITMENT FOR ADDITIONAL MILITARY ASSISTANCE DURING HIS FORTHCOMING VISIT TO MOSCOW.

4. REVIEWING SYRIAN-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS, MRS VERED SAID THAT STRAINS WERE DEFINITELY BEGINNING TO APPEAR IN RELATIONSHIP. SYRIANS HAD RESENTED SERIES OF STEPS, WHICH THEY BELIEVED TO BE UNILATERAL, THAT EGYPT HAD TAKEN SINCE ITS ACCEPTANCE OF CEASEFIRE ON OTOBER 22. MOST RECENT EXAMPLES OF THIS WERE (A) EGYPTIAN SUPPORT FOR LIFTING OIL EMBARGO AGAINST US AND (B) EGYPTIAN OPPOSITION TO CONVOCATION OF ARAB SUMMIT MEETING THIS MONTH WHICH SYRIA HAD WANTED. SYRIA DESIRED EGYPTIAN SUPPORT FOR ITS MAXIMALIST POSITIONS WHICH SADAT WAS UNWILLING TO GIVE. SYRIAN FONMIN KHADDAM WAS MOST VOCAL CTITIC OF THE EGYPTIANSN BUT MRS VERED SAID THAT ASAD'S DEPENDENCE ON SADAT FOR POLITICAL SUPPORT MADE MAJOR RIFTS UNLIKELY, AT LEAST FOR TIME BEING.

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